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GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF MATURE INDUSTRIES

Statement of Purpose

The Massachusetts' economy is healthy relative to most other industrial states, with one of the nation's lowest unemployment rates. Our service and high technology industries have held their own during the recent recession. Our more traditional industries, although hurt by the recession, underwent their major shakeouts during previous decades. Many other states look to Massachusetts as a model for the balanced economy of the future.

Unfortunately, our relative good fortune is not enjoyed by all of our citizens or in all regions of the state. And industrial dislocation continues. Today, 192,000 of our men and women are out of work. The most recent unemployment rate for minorities was over eleven percent. Last year, three times as many of our plants closed and twice as many jobs were lost as in 1981. Areas like North Adams, New Bedford, Athol, and the Cape continued to be plagued by economic problems as serious as those of Detroit or Pittsburgh. The human and social costs of excessive unemployment can be measured in broken spirits, broken homes, high crime rates, dwindling government resources, and communities in decline.

In short, the Massachusetts economy has performed well -- but not well enough. We must do better. We must develop an industrial policy to move the state toward a truly balanced economy-- balanced in its industrial mix and in its distribution of benefits to the Commonwealth's regions and citizens.

We need to preserve and strengthen the competitive advantage enjoyed by our high technology and service sectors since their products and expertise hold great promise for revitalizing more troubled parts of our economy. At the same time, we must stabilize and expand our mature industries, for they will continue to provide the majority of manufacturing jobs for today's and tomorrow's workforce.

We must anticipate dynamic international and technological changes that will be an inevitable part of this decade. We must recognize that changes cause disruption and pain in people's lives and have very real public costs. Yet, change also provides for improved opportunities. Throughout this time of great change, we must strive to maintain our competitive business climate, as well as our tradition of providing good wages and benefits to our workers, first rate public services, and a healthy environment for our citizens. Within this framework, the purpose of this Commission on the Future of Mature Industries is to develop a comprehensive and cooperative strategy among leaders from business, labor and government for supporting and strengthening the Commonwealth's more mature industries.



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The Commission will survey the condition of our manufacturing base; consider the appropriate role of state government in identifying and aiding troubled firms and strengthening more stable companies; catalogue existing and needed resources for financing, management, marketing, plant modernization and technical assistance; profile the workforce in these industries; analyze workforce retraining resources and needs; investigate the reasons for plant closings; consider effective means of responding to such closings and the resulting employee and community dislocations, including notification, worker buyouts, and targeted retraining; review the experience of other states and nations in aiding troubled firms and recommend appropriate actions including proposed legislation on the federal, state and local levels, as well as by the private sector and organized labor.

This effort will complement a parallel effort around our knowledge-based industries that will begin shortly. These two activities will converge in early 1984 to form the basis of a new, broadly conceived, industrial policy for the state, designed to maintain Massachusetts' historic role as the leading industrial state in the Union.

